MARVEL

DOCTOR STRANGE

#11

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NOWLAN
ROMERO
BELLAIRE

STEPHEN STRANGE was a preeminent surgeon until a car accident damaged the nerves in his hands. His ego drove him to scour the globe for a miracle cure, but instead he found a mysterious wizard called the ANCIENT ONE who taught him magic and that there are things in this world bigger than himself. These lessons led Stephen to become the Sorcerer Supreme, Earth's first defense against all manner of magical threats. His patients call him...

DOCTOR STRANGE

The EMPIRIKUL, an interdimensional army, has destroyed almost all magic on Earth. Stephen and Earth's mages managed to defeat them, but the state of magic will never be the same again.

Now left to rebuild from the remains of the Sanctum Sanctorum, Doctor Strange finds himself at a crossroads.

THE NEW FACE OF MAGIC

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YEARS AGO.
THIS IS THE REAL DEAL, MAN. 100% PURE MUTANT GROWTH HORMONE.
THIS STUFF'LL MAKE YOU FLY, LIKE FOR REAL. OR MAKE YOU STRONG ENOUGH TO CRUSH A CAR WITH YOUR BARE HANDS.

I'D SETTLE FOR BEING ABLE TO WIPE MY BUTT WITHOUT SCREAMING IN PAIN.
GIVE ME ALL YOU GOT.

YOU KNOW HOW TO DO THIS?
I'VE...SEEN IT DONE. BUT MY HANDS...I CAN'T... YOU'LL HAVE TO DO IT FOR ME.
THAT'LL COST YA EXTRA. ROLL UP YOUR SLEEVE.

HRGGGGGHH!!!

DUDE, YOU GAVE HIM TOO MUCH.
I GAVE THE MAN WHAT HE PAID FOR. AIN'T MY FAULT IF HE CAN'T HANDLE HIS--
GUGGH!

ARRGGGH!!!
LASER EYES. LOOK OUT!

HEY, MAN, YOU BETTER GET THOSE THINGS UNDER CONTROL BEFORE SOMEBODY CALLS THE--
HRRRRPH...

OH, HELL.
I TOLD YOU YOU GAVE HIM TOO MUCH.
SHUT UP AND GRAB HIS LEGS.

50%

GAAAAAAGGHH!!!
BLLRRGGGHH!!!
KEEP SEARCHING, STEPHEN STRANGE.

WHHHGH? WHO?
IT DIDN'T WORK...
I STILL CAN'T...
THAT WAS MY LAST CHANCE. TRIED EVERYTHING I COULD POSSIBLY... WHAT DO I...
WHERE THE HELL DO I GO NOW?
See TIBET!
FLY ROXXON AIR

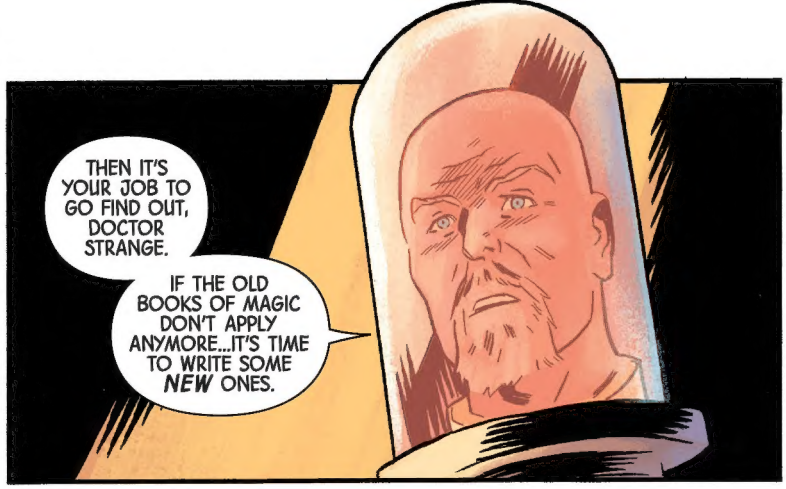
NOW.
YOU'VE HARDLY TOUCHED YOUR MAI TAI, STEPHEN. IS SOMETHING WRONG?
NO OFFENSE, CHONDU...

...BUT IT JUST DOESN'T TASTE THE SAME.
NO, I DON'T SUPPOSE IT DOES.

THE BAR TOOK QUITE A HIT FROM THE EMPIRIKUL. MUCH WAS LOST THAT CAN NEVER BE REPLACED.
TELL ME ABOUT IT.
THIS WAS *MONAKO'S* SEAT.
BUT WE WILL REBUILD, NO MATTER HOW LONG IT TAKES. WE WILL REOPEN.

AND THE MAGIC WE HAD HERE WILL RETURN, STEPHEN. IN WAYS WE NEVER IMAGINED.
I WISH I COULD SAY THE SAME.

I FEEL LIKE I'M STARTING OVER FROM SCRATCH, CHONDU. LIKE EVERYTHING I EVER LEARNED FROM THE ANCIENT ONE HAS BEEN BURNED AWAY, AND NOW THERE'S NOTHING BUT...
...I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT THERE IS.


THEN IT'S YOUR JOB TO GO FIND OUT, DOCTOR STRANGE.
IF THE OLD BOOKS OF MAGIC DON'T APPLY ANYMORE...IT'S TIME TO WRITE SOME *NEW* ONES.

ONE SPELL AT A TIME, IF THAT'S WHAT IT TAKES.
I'LL DO MY BEST, CHONDU. THANKS.

BONK

ONE SPELL AT A TIME.

THE BAR WITH NO DOORS WASN'T THE ONLY PLACE THAT TOOK A HIT FROM THE EMPIRIKUL.
WE ALL DID. ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING MAGIC RELATED.

THEY ALMOST KILLED IT. ALL OF IT. AND EVEN NOW, ALL THE MAGIC IN THE WORLD IS STILL STRUGGLING TO COME BACK.
LET'S SEE HOW WE'RE LOOKING TODAY.

LIKE A GARDEN THAT'S BEEN MOWED OVER... IT'S JUST STARTING TO FLOWER AGAIN.

IT'S MY JOB TO KEEP A WATCHFUL EYE ON THAT GARDEN. TO NOURISH IT AS BEST I CAN.

AND PULL ANY *WEEDS* IF NEED BE.

HEY THERE. YOU'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO BE HERE, BUDDY.
I'M GONNA HAVE TO ASK YOU TO...TO UH...

THERE WAS A TIME A THING LIKE THIS WOULD'VE BEEN *AFRAID* OF ME.
I SWEAR, THERE *REALLY* WAS.

177A BLEECKER STREET, GREENWICH VILLAGE, NEW YORK. THE SANCTUM SANCTORUM OF DOCTOR STRANGE.

WHOA, DOC. I THOUGHT YOU WERE JUST GOING FOR A WALK.

WALKS ARE A BIT TOUGHER THAN THEY USED TO BE.
IS WONG BACK?
NOT THAT I'VE HEARD.
DOC, I'VE BEEN ORGANIZING THOSE NOTES YOU'VE BEEN SCRIBBLING.

WE'VE GOT OLD SPELLS THAT DON'T WORK ANYMORE.
AND NEW ONES THAT DO.
YOU UH... CAN PROBABLY GUESS WHICH IS WHICH. SO WHAT EXACTLY SHOULD I DO WITH ALL--

THE EMPIRIKUL BURNED MY LIBRARY, SO WE'RE GOING TO NEED TO BUILD A NEW ONE. ONE PAGE AT A TIME.
CONGRATULATIONS, ZELMA STANTON, YOU'RE NOW THE AUTHOR OF ALL THINGS MAGIC.
OH. OKAY.
BUT I'VE STILL GOT YOGA CLASS AT 4:00.

UNNGH!

THE DOORS ARE STILL A BIT TEMPERAMENTAL.
IS IT DONE, WONG?

THE MONKS HAVE ALL BEEN SENT HOME. AND THE TEMPLE OF THE SECRET DEFENDERS HAS BEEN DISMANTLED. JUST AS YOU REQUESTED.
THOUGH I STILL THINK YOU'RE MAKING A--
I KNOW YOU DO. BUT THIS IS THE WAY IT HAS TO BE.
MAY I ASK WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR FACE?

THIS IS JUST THE WAY I LOOK NOW, WONG.
SAY HELLO TO THE NEW FACE OF MAGIC.

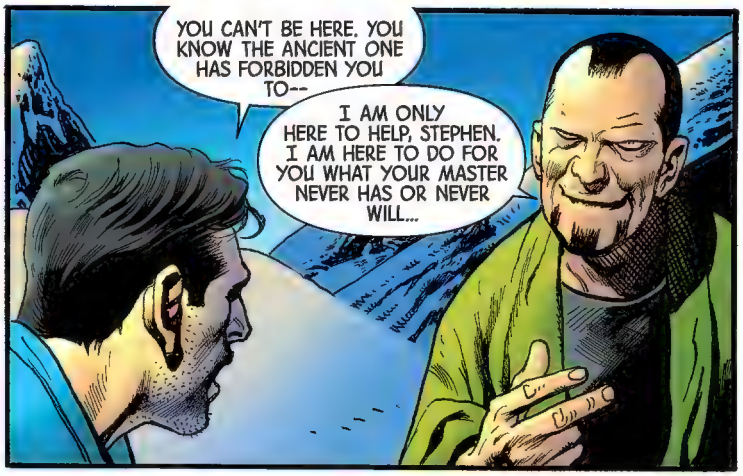
ALL THAT TRAINING. ALL THOSE SPELLS I HAD TO LEARN.
THE ANCIENT ONE NEVER TOLD ME I COULD JUST USE A BASEBALL BAT WRAPPED IN ENCHANTED BARBED WIRE.

STEPHEN, WHERE ARE YOU--
GOT A MEETING...

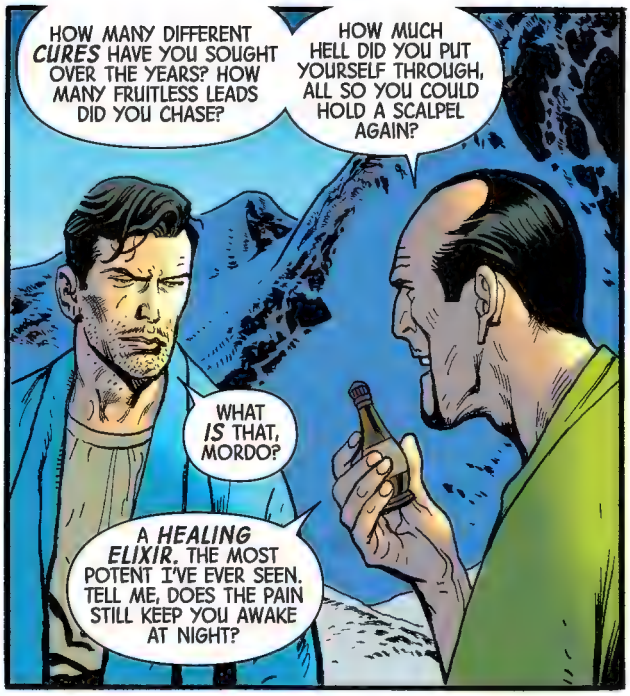
"...WITH AN OLD FRIEND."
YEARS AGO.

GOOD NEWS. YOUR QUEST IS AT AN END.

BEHOLD, STEPHEN STRANGE. I BRING YOU THE MIRACLE YOU HAVE CROSSED THE WORLD TO FIND.
MORDO?


YOU CAN'T BE HERE. YOU KNOW THE ANCIENT ONE HAS FORBIDDEN YOU TO--
I AM ONLY HERE TO HELP, STEPHEN. I AM HERE TO DO FOR YOU WHAT YOUR MASTER NEVER HAS OR NEVER WILL...

...REPAIR YOUR SHATTERED HANDS.
WHAT?

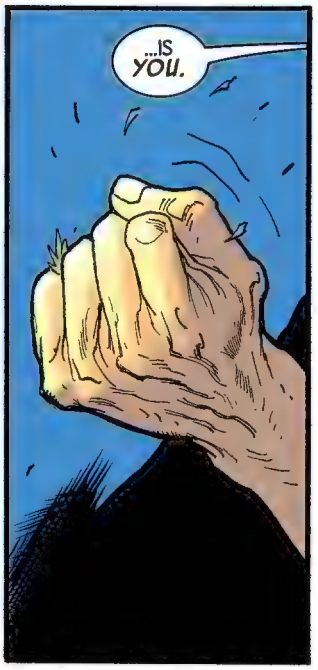

HOW MANY DIFFERENT *CURES* HAVE YOU SOUGHT OVER THE YEARS? HOW MANY FRUITLESS LEADS DID YOU CHASE?
HOW MUCH HELL DID YOU PUT YOURSELF THROUGH, ALL SO YOU COULD HOLD A SCALPEL AGAIN?
WHAT *IS* THAT, MORDO?
A *HEALING ELIXIR.* THE MOST POTENT I'VE EVER SEEN. TELL ME, DOES THE PAIN STILL KEEP YOU AWAKE AT NIGHT?

THE ANCIENT ONE SAYS THE PAIN IS A PART OF ME NOW. THAT THERE'S NO CHANGING THAT.
OF COURSE HE DOES. BECAUSE HE'S DESPERATE TO KEEP YOU HERE. IN SERVICE TO HIM. IN *SLAVERY.*

THIS, STEPHEN, IS EMANCIPATION.
I DON'T BELIEVE A WORD YOU SAY, MORDO. I KNOW WHY THE ANCIENT ONE EXPELLED YOU. I KNOW WHAT YOU--
PLEASE, DO NOT TAKE MY WORD FOR IT.

ALLOW ME TO PROVIDE A DEMONSTRATION.
NOW, IMAGINE IF YOU WILL, STEPHEN, THAT THIS *BIRD...*

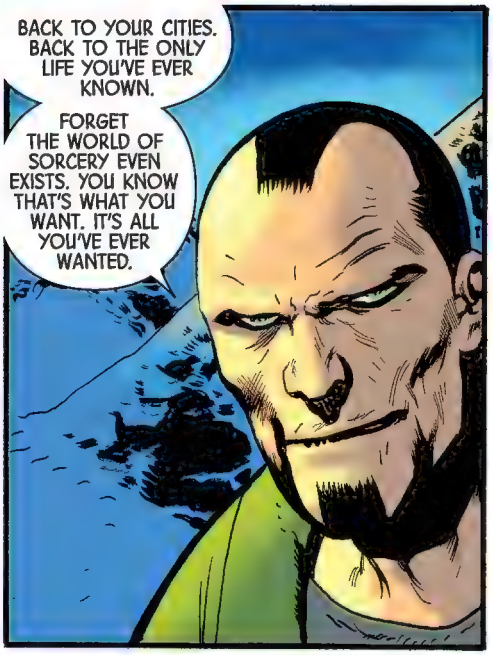
...THIS SWEET, NAIVE LITTLE CREATURE...

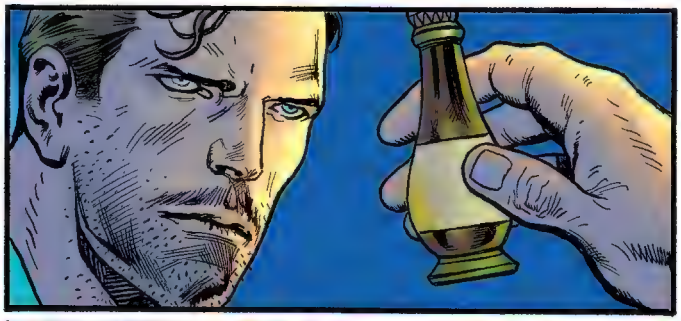

...IS *YOU.*

ONE DROP IS ALL IT TAKES AND...

...DOCTOR STRANGE IS FREE TO FLY AWAY HOME.

TAKE IT, STEPHEN. TAKE YOUR CURE AND GO. GO BACK WHERE YOU BELONG.


BACK TO YOUR CITIES. BACK TO THE ONLY LIFE YOU'VE EVER KNOWN.
FORGET THE WORLD OF SORCERY EVEN EXISTS. YOU KNOW THAT'S WHAT YOU WANT. IT'S ALL YOU'VE EVER WANTED.



NO.

RRRRRRGGGHHH!!!
UUGH!
YOU DO NOT BELONG HERE, STRANGE! YOU NEVER HAVE!
TAKE THIS GIFT AND GO! WHILE YOUR HANDS ARE STILL THE ONLY THING ON YOU THAT ARE BROKEN!
I'M NOT LEAVING, MORDO.
WHAT? WHAT DID YOU SAY?
I SAID...MY NAME IS STEPHEN STRANGE...
...AND I CHOOSE MAGIC!

HI. REMEMBER ME?
HUH? ARE YOU TALKING TO--
WHAT SAY WE TRY THIS AGAIN?
MAN, THE WEIRDOS IN THIS CITY GET WEIRDER EVERY DAY, BUT WOW...
AT LEAST MY HEAD SUDDENLY FEELS A LOT BETTER.

YOU'RE LATE.
SORRY, I GOT A BIT... DELAYED.

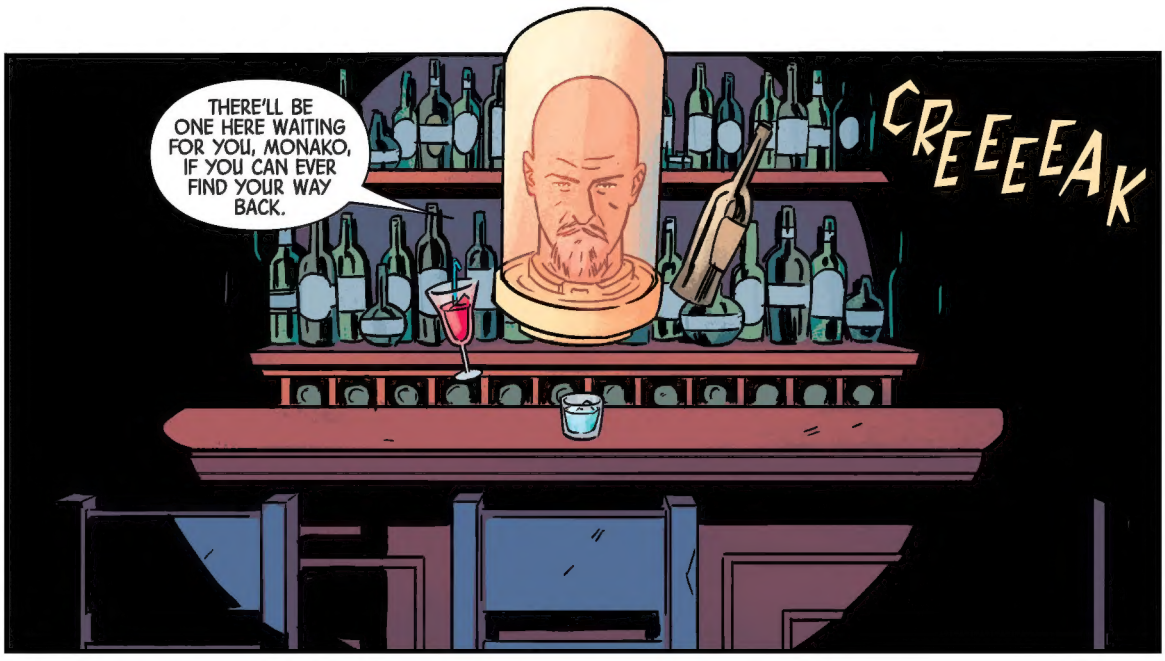
I SUPPOSE THAT EXPLAINS THE FACE.
IS THERE ANYTHING I NEED TO BE MADE AWARE OF?

ARE THERE ANY REASONS YOU MIGHT BE THINKING OF *LEAVING* US?

I'M NOT LEAVING...
...UNTIL I'VE LEARNED *EVERYTHING.*
WELL THEN...

"...WE HAVE A LOT OF WORK TO DO, DON'T WE?"

NO ONE EVER SAID MAGIC WOULD BE EASY.
SQUEAK
BUT THIS IS SUDDENLY A LOT HARDER THAN IT USED TO BE.
GET A JOB. LOSER.
THANKS.
BUT I'VE ALREADY GOT ONE.


THERE'LL BE ONE HERE WAITING FOR YOU, MONAKO, IF YOU CAN EVER FIND YOUR WAY BACK.
CREEEEAK

HELLO, WHO'S...
...MONAKO?
I HEARD MONAKO WAS DEAD. HEARD A FEW OTHER THINGS TOO.
OH, NO.

POUR US A DRINK, CHONDU. THERE'S A LOT TO CELEBRATE.
BARON MORDO IS BACK IN TOWN.
AND HE'S EAGER TO SEE SOME OLD FRIENDS.
NEXT: BLOOD IN THE AETHER!

YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT HAPPENS *NEXT?*

MARVEL

ALL-NEW STORY
"BLOOD IN THE AETHER"
STARTS HERE!

DOCTOR STRANGE #12

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